

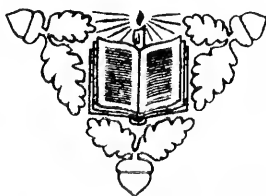
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“The Missing Link”

and The Howard Theatre



BY

J. ARTHUR DAVIS, A. B.

Former Theatre Manager

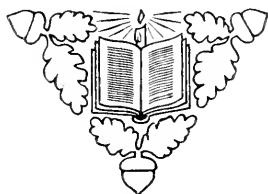
WASHINGTON, D. C.

Price 15 Cents.



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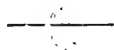


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1911

MURRAY BROS. PRESS

Washington, D. C.

1910

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FOREWORD

Club Motto: "THE END JUSTIFIES THE MEANS."



THE co-existence of the Americo-Anglo-Saxon and the Afro-American presents an aspect at once tragic and unparalleled. This Americo-Anglo-Saxon sprang from the loins of the commonwealths of England and Germany, of France and Spain—in short from the Caucasian race whose history reputes it to have been a globe-trotting gambler:

"Whose game was empire
And whose stakes were thrones,
Whose table the earth,
Whose dice were human bones."

From the branches of this race the American-Anglo-Saxon has been moulded into a most hardy and virile type of man—into a highly complex civilization.

Pitted against him is the Afro-American evolved from the lowest tribes of West Africa; and moulded into what? Into the arts and devices of oppression mastered by the Americo-Anglo-Saxon; and into the dire strategem of those leading Negroes appointed by Americo-Anglo-Saxon public sentiment.

The Afro-American forms what? An invisible world. In it the average Afro-American builds a veneered civilization.

So long had the Afro-American those slave masters who selected his habitat, his food, his raiment, his family life, that his volition, nay, his every sensibility, was impaired, and the average Afro-American walks in this invisible world only semi-conscious of things about him—rather careless, happy, singing and laughing his occasional troubles away and forming a spiral development.

He seems to regard the Americo-Anglo-Saxon government as an inexorable natural order of things which man did not help to construct; and which he should not attempt to impeach.

He frets and fumes awhile, but this is like the action of the farmer who grows sullen behind the plow because of excessive heat or rain, and who is just as likely to pray as to swear; he finally consoles himself that this weather is God's business, His natural laws, and that he has no right to interfere, and so he moves on.

Accordingly, we see the average Afro-American suffering the Americo-Anglo-Saxon to throw into this invisible world every humiliation—he endures every pollution, every rapacity, every inadequacy, every inefficiency—in fact, anything, rather than bravely dare the responsibilities of freedom!

The purpose of "The Secret Boycotting and Equitable Club" is to espouse the cause of the oppressed.

It is in the interest of this new school movement that this booklet has been written.

THE AUTHOR.

The Missing Link and The Howard Theatre

By J. ARTHUR DAVIS, A. B.

There are only two fundamental necessities, namely: That which protects mankind from heat and cold, and that which satisfies hunger and thirst.

The essential ingredient and charm of man's endeavor beyond the securing of actual necessities is luxury and achievement. If the climate which man inhabits does not naturally furnish his necessities, he must develop the economic fitness to produce them. The ambition merely to secure necessities is often true as well of a given people as of individuals. This difference of ambition largely accounts for a variation of development; for to the extent that man realizes his own personality, puts forth all his powers and potencies and unfolds the flower of his being, he develops certain traits, both mental and temperamental, newer methods and systems to utilize production and to foster transportation and communication. Thus he expands himself to wider influences and newer social conditions, both as to each individual to the other, also to society and surrounding peoples.

Anent such expansion two instincts, which fundamentally characterize mankind in his complex relation to society, grow one or the other, more or less pertinent, to wit: The instinct to control and the instinct to submit. These instincts are noticeably true of children on playgrounds where one, or more, assume or affect to assume, the leadership in plays, or more particularly among men in their daily contact where the fittest control. But the greatest exhibition of these instincts occurs between races, more or less, and is an appalling aspect in our state—country, as observed between the Anglo-Saxon especially, and the Negro, we may add, wherever these two peoples largely intermingle in physical contact.

Born of a climate which forces them to acquire a great economic and social efficiency, the whites have developed preparedness to exercise very keenly, even despotically, the sense of control, while the Negro, born of opposite climate, making his condition necessarily one of comparative submission, has often and philosophically exercised the instinct of submission.

Some writers consider this quality of the Negro evidence of an inherent inferiority. William Benjamin Smith, author of "The Color Line," in an academic and sentimental outburst exclaims:

"Has it just happened that, in all quarters of the world and under all climatic and topographic conditions East and West, North and South, beneath the tropics and within the frozen circles, by the sea and amid the mountains, in snow, in sand, in forest—that everywhere and everywhen the Caucasian has manifested the same all-conquering, over-mastering qualities—not always good or kind or just, but always strong, always striving, always victorious? And never and nowhere and under no circumstances, has the black man displayed any such capacities as could bring him for a moment into consideration as the white man's equal?" . . . "The race is what its life is and has been" . . . "Accordingly, the Negro being concededly inferior to the white, there is no hope of raising him to the white level by education or civilization." . . . "This question is: what has the future in store for the Negro? If social equality must be resolutely denied him forever, if he is to be treated as an outcast and a pariah, because of his race and the weight of inheritance which he can never shake off from his shoulders, what hope remains? Where are the blessings of freedom? Is their emancipation but an apple of Sodom turning to ashes on his lips?"

It is interesting as well as remarkable, or rather painful, to observe the many devices the whites have contrived from time to time to exercise control over the Negro. The first was physical or chattel slavery. This Western civilization was growing too complex to longer tolerate, hence other or kindred forms of oppression were invoked; these are:

- (a) Seduction of courts to humiliate and crucify Negroes.
- (b) Lynching bees, mobs and burning at the stake.
- (c) Disfranchisement.
- (d) Peonage, chain-gangs and fraudulent contracts.
- (e) "Jim Crowism," "Optional Jim Crowism."
- (f) Sensational Journalism.
- (g) Industrialism.
- (h) Christianity (used as an excuse to teach obedience).
- (i) Etc., etc., etc.

To summarize: If chattel slavery were mostly physical, these kindred forms of oppression effect in the Negro an intellectual slavery. It was this chain of circumstances which made necessary, if he be necessary, a Booker T. Washington, a man of many proportions and at times a very ugly spectacle; but a perfect mirror of Afro-Americans. In him is found perfected their diplomatic or philosophic nature and disposition which this chain of circumstances demands and to which Afro-Americans have adapted themselves in order to exist side by side with the white American.

Although the acute sovereign spirit and better manhood of Afro-Americans died ere Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote, or John Brown wept, or even before Lincoln issued from the womb of time, white sentiment has held forth this man as a mediator between the two races as if to watch over the Negro and to impeach his aims as a man, by using wrongfully a needed factor, the industrial regime to espouse this cause. As if industrialism were more healthy in serfdom than intellectualism. Accordingly, industrialism being pitted against serfdom at the South and unionism at the North, it has reacted to impress the masses of Negroes to under-rate themselves, to retrace their steps, as it were, from matters highly intellectual and of state to keep quiet and demand less than average Americans. This man has had no more impress upon their thrift and industry than a thunderbolt has upon the change of seasons. The further result nationally has been practically to reduce the Negro, North and South, to the same civil level and to an insignificant quantity in politics.

As the great upheaval of the Civil War severed States asunder, gave the Negro legislative power and executive authority, brought forth altruistic and philanthropic friends, and as the causes of this upheaval were removed, the States coalesced, Negroes lost gradually their power, influence and friends, even so will the surging tide of industrialism subside as the latent causes expire which produced them; which causes were to reduce nationally the Negro to a given and fixed humiliated level. Thus will end three distinct epochs of the Negro's history—slavery, enfranchisement, and the making of him a half-man.

The death of Mr. Washington and his work will be coincident. Five years after this event will be amply sufficient, despite law and order, for his State to turn Tuskegee over to the white youths. But for all this, he is blameless and well-intentional in his demeanor; his race bore and nurtured him; Africa made his race; God made all. Fix the responsibility! Like Blind Tom, he is a monstrosity. To Blind Tom every sound was music and he could reproduce it. To Mr. Washington everything inter-racial is peace and harmony, and all matter needs industrializing. Could he command the tail of the comet, he would hang it over Tuskegee.

Lynch him! Breathe a new life into his being, even then with the courtesy of an "After-you-my-dear-Gaston," he would exclaim, "All is peace and order." "In things social we can be as separate as the fingers, but in things industrial, we can be one as the hand!"

Prominent men always embody certain traits of their people, and their conduct and achievement are dependent upon the social efficiency of that people. The social efficiency of different peoples often makes vast differences in their men.

When the International Sunday School convention offered membership to President Diaz of Mexico, he is said to have remarked:

"When a people like the Americans draw the color line on black people and I accept membership, with my republic full of black men, who are manning our railroads, army and national industries, I would be unfit to make laws for any people. The black man has rights and privileges in Mexico that the world must respect and I will not wash my hands by accepting a membership in an association which seeks to enslave my fellowman."

"I trust the American Negro will not weaken, but will fight for his rights until the judgment day, when we shall all meet Him face to face."

Mr. Washington accepted this membership with the deepest gratitude.

It is noteworthy that race sentiment and volition must produce men capable of leadership and correct their attitude; must effect moral evolutions. In this essential Afro-Americans have been very inert. It is grievous to observe their pacific nature and endurance of humiliation. Neither oppression nor current events have had much effect upon this disposition.

The Revolt of San Domingo Blacks, which brought their freedom, precipitated freedom in Venezuela, Brazil, Jamaica, and compelled Napoleon to exclaim: "If a handful of Negroes in San Domingo can destroy my legions, I could not hold Louisiana in case of war. I will sell at once." This, we say, failed to inspire Afro-Americans. Nor did they give John Brown a passing notice, and, nay, shamefully remained loyal and enslaved after the North had clashed with the South, till they were asked and sought to shoulder arms, thus paving their way to a probable endless oppression upon American soil.

The assassin's dart or the power of an explosive, they know not, nor have they volunteered one drop of blood during all their disfranchisement. It would seem that, if Anglo-Saxons are masters of the art to control, Afro-Americans are masters of the art to submit.

To further demonstrate racial relation, it seems sufficient to expound chiefly two devices, namely: (1) "Jim Crowism," and, incidentally, Separateness. (2) Optional "Jim Crowism."

"Jim Crowism" is a peculiar device of the artful Anglo-Saxon.

It arises from a sense of blood superiority that causes a hostile public opinion which discriminates in influencing courts to render discriminatory decisions, or legislators to pass segregating laws. "Jim Crowism" does not assume that the Negro is inferior, *it asserts it, and* proceeds to authorize him to act accordingly. Such signals, "This Car for Whites Only," "This Entrance for Colored," "No dogs, cats or Negroes allowed in here," are pertinent reminders of this sense of blood superiority. It is an incentive to whites to form greater race volition, and administers a sort of hypnotic state of mind into the weaker Negro, effecting his belief that probably he is a little inferior to whites. He proceeds to minimize his sense of rights and unconsciously responds by conduct to that feeling.

"Jim Crowism" aims squarely at the mind. It is a dangerous and curious hypnotic. "Jim Crowism" and the misconstrued conceptions of industrialism have had as sordid an effect upon the Negro as the opium habit upon Chinese. It is difficult for the average mind to tell where "Jim Crowism" begins or ends. Herein lies the ensnaring force and occult power.

"Jim Crowism" must be distinguished from separateness and optional "Jim Crowism." Separateness is an outgrowth of race integrity and race volition to maintain self-respect and manliness against discrimination, and to develop an individual species and racial projection to the exclusion of any alien relation likely to propagate spurious ties and bonds, or humiliation. It is the positive act of a people voluntarily to accommodate themselves to supply their own demands and thereby save racial pride.

The most noteworthy incident of separateness sprang from the Japanese trouble on the Pacific Slope. After the Russo-Japanese War the expanding energies of the Flowery Kingdom resulted in considerable immigration to this country, precipitating agitation for the exclusion of Japanese laborers and the Jim-Crowing of Japanese children in the public schools of San Francisco. As an alternative to accepting "Jim Crowism," or sending the United States an ultimatum as a *causa belli*, Japan adopted the following policy of Separateness, to mention: That Japan herself be esteemed the privilege and accorded the confidence to regulate and restrict her own laborers or immigration in accordance with her dignity and honor. This conceded, she did thus and followed that step quietly by the policy, "Asia for the Asiatics, and Japan for the Queen of Asia." To-day the hand of the Mikado directly directs, but quietly and secretly, the policy of the Orient.

It is further mentionable that the A. M. E. Church and Negro Baptist Churches are examples of Negro Separateness.

(2) Optional "Jim Crowism" arises from the mercenary instinct and sagacity of whites to make monetary profits from supplying the demands of weaker Negroes wherever that demand arises from "Jim-Crowing" Negroes from a particular place or places of amusements or where there is possibility of social intermingling. Optional "Jim Crowism" is more economic than racial.

Self-respect, manliness, sufficient to refuse to patronize such enterprises, and investments to establish enterprises similar to those which white mercenaries establish to accommodate Negroes, are expedient and indispensable. Being socially ostracized it is but a policy of separateness to foster such enterprises. This practically amounts to a boycott, and is a sure panacea for optional "Jim Crowism."

But the remedy for blotting out "Jim Crowism" remains uncovered. It is rather too late, or seems so, for the Negro to blot it out. To do so now would require more manhood than the Negro has hitherto possessed, much money, and possibly the shedding of much blood. To approach practical cases and review these "isms," as found in Washington, D. C. Here is an enormous field for Negro energy along aesthetic and constructive lines. Where there is a demand there must be a supply. As the aesthetic tendency of a people grows proper amusement must be fostered.

As to shows, even such demand a few energetic Negroes established four motion picture and vaudeville houses: Maceo, Minchaha, The Ford Dabney, and Hiawatha, all in the vicinity of the True Reformers' Hall. They were well patronized at first, but did not supply the demand of one hundred thousand Negroes. This economic fact and the kindred and social fact that in this city large first-class theaters bar Negro shows and "Jim Crow" Negro patronage, the further fact that all white motion picture house, either "Jim Crow" Negroes, or peremptorily demand no Negro patronage at all, gives occasion to white mercenaries to make even a stampede at establishing optional "Jim-Crow" theaters for Negroes. Enough to prick the heart of an Ajax! This depravity is, when whites "Jim Crow" Negroes either in or from every available and respectable amusement place, or in cases of common carriage, thus driving them upon their own resources for pleasure as a last resort; and then when the white mercenaries invade that last resort to build optional "Jim Crow"

theaters, or other places of amusements, to accommodate Negroes to the practical exclusion of whites is just as humiliating and damaging as any established conditions of "Jim Crowism."

It is noteworthy that,

(1) The owners employ, as a designation of these shows, names generally of heroic whites who have historic reputation for achievement in behalf of Negroes and to whom Negroes more or less feel grateful. Such names are: "The Lincoln," and "The Howard." By this they intend a sympathy, though mendacious, as an inducement.

Note their reservation of self-respect and loyalty to their own race. They do not name any after noted Negroes.

(2) They generally use Negroes to manage, more especially to operate, such shows.

The fact that they direct such shows through Negroes neither lessens their blighting effect nor in any way ameliorates the gravity of the situation. It is simply an imposing compromise for patronage. Think of it! Some mercenaries were so audacious as to invade the community of True Reformers' Hall and to establish an optional "Jim-Crow" theater and to name it "The Howard!" Think of the community and think of the presumption. Here is a community which, in religious and educational advantages, in culture and refinement, in ministry and churches, is the peer of any in all America! The presumption was, that neither wealth, nor culture, nor science, nor art, nor morality, nor religion—not even Christianity itself—can teach the Negro self-respect, manliness and the love of rights.

It is quite generally known that this community boycotted this theater and that therefore its doors were never opened by white mercenaries. It was obtained by colored men and re-named "Minchrida."

But how far could the boycott extend? Could the success of this boycott stimulate and inspire Negro Washington to make a boycott as universal as is optional "Jim Crowism"? Not hardly. Some urge that it was a boycott; it was not a boycott, that since this theater was surrounded by three others, it was doomed as an economic failure, in the minds of these mercenaries. Not so; the self-respect of this community, and the fact that their demand for this kind of amusement was being supplied by nearby shows, owned and operated by Negroes, easily stimulated the boycott to success. Mr. Keys, manager of "Hiawatha," vehemently asks, "Has the Negro ever been known so grossly to

resent intrusions upon his manhood and self-respect as to make a boycott?"

The boycott ceased here; but the animus of mercenaries has held on with undaunted courage. We observe that mercenaries from Baltimore have established with a jiffy an optional "Jim Crow," large, high-class theater on T Street, between Sixth and Seventh Streets, N. W. They name it "The Howard," too. What a coincidence! What a sponge on this name! Can it be boycotted? Should it be? Let us see. It is very logically and centrally located from a strategic point for local patronage.

A white theatrical manager remarks to me: "This theater is located in a community of a different class of Negroes from those of the True Reformers' Community. As a whole, they have less self-respect and are not as comfortably situated. I think this theater will take."

It has a full sweep at the rabble element of our race down Seventh Street. Northeast of it has the Le Droit Park community; that, though for the most is the social equal of the community about True Reformers' Hall, has decidedly not the *esprit de corps* which essentially makes and asserts self-consciousness, manliness, and racial integrity. To the east lies a community very decidedly middle class, largely mixed with rabble elements. Thus the average tendency is an average Negro community. Were these mercenaries sagacious? Did they know that this city is the Capital of the Union? That the average Negro has equal opportunities for education, for general uplift, in fine, for general civilization? Hence, did they know whether the average Negro's self-respect would forbid such voluntary humiliation of himself to patronize this show? Some things it is certain they knew. They knew that the average Negroes are supporting at least five optional "Jim-Crow" theaters running practically for their exclusive patronage. They knew there is a shameful incident where the management of the theater separates Negroes from whites by a partition about six feet high, like a stall in a stable, and that the Negroes virtually swarm this place. They knew, too, of another theater where the management separates the foul Negroes from the clean, and the clean Negroes from the whites. They perhaps knew that in down-town first-class theaters the management cannot pull the Negro out of theaters, either by his ears or his toes. They certainly did not know, however, that there is not a precedent in this country where a one-hundred-thousand-dollar enterprise was based rather exclusively upon a *single necessity* of

the Negro, unless it were religious, sick or death benefits, which are his fundamental, unavoidable investments. Hence, it will likely fail economically, if not boycotted.

Should it be boycotted? *Absolutely so.* Because (1) such invasions are an enormous calamity, being a solvent upon the Negro's efforts at enterprise and racial organization, and make for a serious crisis. For only such an effort can possibly save the Negro in this complex, industrial and harsh civilization. The average and industrious elements of a people are the bulwark of its future. If they are allured and dissolved what hope remains? Certainly none.

It is well to mention that the Lincoln Memorial Building Company, of Negroes, planned a four-hundred-thousand-dollar enterprise, the purpose of which was to furnish one first-class theater, fifty store-rooms, a convention hall, and many other accommodations. A wise plan! But did not this Howard invasion react largely as a solvent upon the theater feature of it? Did it not react likewise upon the Ford Dabney, Hiawatha, Minnehaha and Maceo? and even enormously disturb Church organization and welfare? The two latter theaters finally failed.

(2) He who owns and operates a theater becomes as much a power and lever of influence to mold the moral character of a community as a minister of the gospel. Unfortunately, as in New York, large theaters which use much female talent have catered to female slave traffic, thus destroying many daughters of good names.

Only when shows are under the ownership and direction of Negroes can they ever be benefactors to Negroes. By reason of their social exclusiveness, whites alienate their sympathetic ties for high moral usefulness to Negroes which such business status requires. So much is this true that the same kind of show, owned and operated by Negroes, for Negroes, will have a different moral effect, if owned and operated by whites, for Negroes, or owned by whites and operated through Negroes, for Negroes. Not only in amusements, but where have whites ever added nobility to Negro morality? Their moral supervision stingeth as an adder and is as blighting as the scourging footsteps of an Attila. It reacts as a solvent upon Negro family life, the bond of marriage is loosened, posterity is degenerated, society rushed headlong, a whole community falls wounded to its deadly clutches, nay, what floodgates of licentiousness does it not unlock and what a mighty hand it must be that can close them again? Bad, indeed, that Negroes

have not properly grasped this inexorable natural law of human nature.

(3) A theater is an educator. To control the education of a people is to *rule* that people, ballot to the contrary notwithstanding. It is to controvert the aims, the purposes, and the energies of a people. The whites no longer depend upon military prowess, or physical tact, to achieve dominant sway. In their luxury of achievement they are willing to match gray matter against gray matter, competitor against competitor under slight adverse conditions of the other fellow. Control the mind of a man or a people, the limbs and body will follow.

There is England in colonization granting minor privileges to petit heathen Kings as bribery, giving the stubborn Dinizulla a few thousand dollars annually, and two pianos and six wives, and granting the little King of Ugandi eighteen thousand annually, and attempts to pacify restless India by placing a native East Indian in high Council. She fostered most vigorously the opium traffic in China; and the United States sends missionaries to the Philippines to carry Christianity, using it as an excuse to teach obedience, while mercenaries sell intoxicants instinctively subduing Philipinos by inspiring their inefficiency.

White public sentiment tolerates Mr. Washington to ride unmolested, as no other Negro can, in first-class sleeping cars anywhere in the South, thus militating against undoing "Jim Crowism," and helping to make him a victim rather than an advocate of industrialism.

To bend one people's mind to suit another's fancies is no new scheme. This deteriorating fact is significant even of chattel slavery. It so suppressed the sensibilities of Afro-Americans as to impair their imagination and originality. Hence, even our present day leaders are seldom found projecting themselves into the future to promulgate any great cause. They rather fall into rank after white dictation and leadership, thus becoming graphophone orators. If their assigned cause has been developed, they may be seen to linger around it as stuffed animals of prey loiter around the bones of a carcass, too sloven to seek a new field, even the energy to probe local conditions and to seek their remedy is essentially impaired. The fact of the Negro living surrounded by every American institution is bound to assimilate him largely and to unmake him of himself.

Naturally, then, devices may occasionally entrap even the best minds of the race, influencing them to endorse, without second

thought, schemes which are decidedly injurious to this race.

Thus, Prof. Kelly Miller, an authority on race issues, passes unobserved the humiliation of the Howard Theater. He writes:

Mr. J. A. Davis,

Arverne, L. I.

My dear Sir:—

In response to your favor I beg leave to say that from present indications, it seems that the Howard Theatre will be well patronized.

As I understand it, this is not a "Jim Crow" theatre, but one in which colored Americans will not be discriminated against, as they are in every other playhouse in the city.

Yours truly,

KELLY MILLER.

Washington, D. C., Aug. 13, 1910.

This is a remarkable letter, not only as indicative of the man, but in that it illustrates the peculiar impulse excited in Afro-Americans by advertisement—the white man's most unique educator. It is characteristic of this man that lacking invitation to institute agitation he becomes an academic philosopher and resolves agitation into a classic. In the storm of agitation he is a polished hero and classic demagogue; but as the storm subsides he grows as calm as a crocodile basking in an African sunlight.

Here is the premier status he fails to appreciate. In Washington two conditions face theater managers or owners:

(1) That legally the Negro in Washington has equal social privilege, without this, that any theater, hotel, or restaurant, has the right to segregate him, but must meanwhile give equal service otherwise.

(2) Socially, the physical law, that two bodies—in other words, the white man and the Negro—cannot occupy the same space at the same time, is practical and enforced.

Hence these theatrical mercenaries evidently ascertained that this social ostracism demanded three distinct classes of theaters in order to pay:

(a) A theater must cater exclusively to white trade, and use white talent only, to make certain to attract colored patronage as little as possible, or

(b) A theater must cater to the public and "Jim Crow" Negroes, or

(c) A theater must cater to Negroes exclusively and only recognize the right of whites to attend.

As if borrowing the idea from advertisements of the Lincoln Memorial Building Company, that one large theater catering to Negroes would immensely pay, certain mercenaries built the How-

and in a community where it must depend entirely upon Negro patronage. As if hearing of the self-respect exercised by Negroes in boycotting the First Howard, they would use much diplomacy to advertise the Howard, far and near, as a theater without discrimination. Why discriminate "in any part" when it is built for Negroes? If it be built for Negroes, is it not discrimination inherent in the enterprise itself, inherent in the social conditions of the two races, and inherent in the social conditions of this community and city when social conditions demand that a Negro theater be built to itself? To say it is exclusively for Negroes is practically true.

A few whites, such as Greeks, Jews and Dagoes, will intermingle here with Negroes, which circumstance is largely induced by this *social opportunity to excite lower passion* between the races.

A Jew remarks to me that: "This theater will be built for the best class of colored people and the prices and management will be regulated to keep the lower classes away." Why should the best blood of the Negro race be intermingled with, and polluted by, these deteriorated descendants of Isaac and Jacob, Demosthenes and Aristotle, Caesar and Cicero?

This grade of social equality, which is so common at the North, excites no better than the lower passions. This relation, is it moral or immoral? It is neither. It is positively non-moral. It is more pitiful than strange that a peculiar social environment, the press and so-called white friends, can educate our leaders to regard as wholesome such stigma of equality. What graphophones they be!

Hon. R. H. Terrell, Judge of the Municipal Court, also overlooks, but more grossly, these inherent social conditions, and seems solely afflicted with the diplomatic advertisements of white mercenaries.

He writes in servility:

Mr. J. Arthur Davis,

Dear Sir: In answer to your query I have to say that the Howard is not to be a house exclusively for colored people.

Everybody will be welcomed and there will be no discrimination at all in any part of the theatre because of color.

It is unfortunate that because colored people are to be treated as they should be at the Howard that the impression is getting abroad that it is to be for colored people only.

The better class of Negroes here would resent such an enterprise.

We hope the day will never come when we shall draw the line against any people on account of their color.

Yours truly,

R. H. TERRELL.

His closing sentence would suggest that the judge is a student of Mars and entirely unfamiliar with this planet. Has not the line been drawn against the Negro from the very day he first landed as a slave at Jamestown? Investigation among the average Negroes seems to reveal two elements: One extorts, "I can't see discrimination in it." This is the dumb element.

Another, "Our men who have money will not build us a big theater." This is the inconsistent element.

A white policeman, discussing theaters, remarks: "I think Negroes are fools for not building a large theater for themselves."

My black countrymen, say, think, do what you may, it were not the purpose of civilization, Christian, or pagan, to nourish a people giving themselves willingly to humiliation. It rather exterminates, sweeps from the very face of the earth such drones. Evolutionists have long exhausted their patience to discover "The Missing Link." Stupid fellows they were! For that phenomenon is easily formed in the person or persons who regularly, knowingly, premeditatingly, and willingly submit themselves to attend optional "Jim Crow" enterprises.

If you persistently surrender yourselves as "The Missing Link," was not the Civil War fought in vain? Was not the franchise an imposition upon the State? And was not the work of philanthropists an idle dream or distorted emphasis? Why appeal to legislators or courts for action against "Jim Crowism," if you yourselves persistently and willingly support optional "Jim Crowism," or tolerate your weaker brother to support the same, which is just as humiliating as "Jim Crowism"? Do you think legislators, judges, or jurors are asleep and unmindful of your conduct? If you take to optional "Jim Crowism" as naturally as birds take to the air and fishes to the sea, could they not justly and reasonably conclude that class legislation is in accordance with your nature, that submission to whites is a law of your action and therefore as inexorable as any organic law of nature? If you accept a given humiliating status and willingly make it a part of your life, your very nature, why blame courts or legislatures for afterwards stamping it as a correct status for you to occupy, by their official action and sanction? As if the inherent qualities, the development from within, do not determine a people's social and political status. As if any people were not

arbitrators of their own future. Can legislatures legislate, or courts prescribe, one people equal to another, or can they reduce any people inferior? Indeed, neither can they do. These fountains of justice may occasionally assist or inconvenience a people, that's all.

"Jim Crow" cars and disfranchisement represent an humble, submissive spirit or nature, and poor economic fitness in the people that permanently endure them, not solely cheap class legislation as generally proclaimed.

Why should any Negro community of this city support optional "Jim Crowism"? They have little complaint against equal protection of law, for equal opportunities for livelihood, have their churches and Sunday schools, public schools and university facilities, in fine, they are in ample touch with civilization and breathe direct the very atmosphere from the dome of the Capitol of the Nation. Should not these things make any community noble, manly, self-respecting? Does the work of civilization not do for them what it does for other peoples? What shall we expect of our fellows in the swamps of Alabama or Mississippi, or in the jungles of Zululand?

This situation involves the interest of all Afro-Americans. To be disfranchised or to ride in a "Jim Crow" car may be a temporary legal compulsion, and to be peoned or lynched may be temporarily unavoidable, though even these things are not necessarily so; but to indulge in optional "Jim Crowism" is at once preventable and an exhibition of shameful weakness. Nay, can such people so careless of themselves be truly elevated, substantially protected by the State? If these "Isms" administer a certain hypnotic state of mind to weaker Negroes causing certain partial loss of self-consciousness, there are certain antiseptics which can revive them. Discover these, whatever they be; use them at any cost.

Whatever be your future to unfetter yourselves from oppression's many horrors, it is absolutely certain that you must first develop sufficient public sentiment within the race to coerce first the weaker members to shun discrimination before you can coerce the opposite race to abandon discrimination.

If you would blot out Jim Crowism, which is authorized by State and Federal authorities, you must first have energy and courage enough to boycott optional "Jim Crowism" which is not any constituted authority at all, but merely represents some alert mercenaries offering allurements and inducements.

"Jim Crowism" says to you: "You are an inferior. I am the iron-clad hand of authority, State and Federal. This is your place; get into it, under penalty of law."

Optional "Jim Crowism" says: "Oh, well, you know you are 'The Missing Link,' but that is all right; let's be friends. I have a place for you. You need a little recreation and I need the money; won't you come in?"

Oh, you self-appointed mercenary humanitarians, maudlin sympathizers and pseudo-Negrophilists, what nerve! What presumption you entertain of this people!

But you, my black countrymen, owe it to yourselves to boycott optional "Jim Crow" enterprises. Why not mould the character of your own sons and daughters? They are not only born of you, but of all your ancestry; to them your other posterity will be born.

Theaters are benefactors; but to be such requires more discretion and guardianship than the alien sympathy of whites will allow them to exercise for Negroes. The infusion of immoral animus is an inducement, especially in the traffic of females. If the white man has ever guarded and protected Negro womanhood, such event has not yet reached written history. We await the arrival of such behavior in him just as laboriously as we await light travelling from some distant star since creation which has not yet reached the earth.

You complain that "it takes time to accomplish this or that." We hear too much of the time element in history; what is it? When will it be? Shall we conjecture it will be when spiders grow bigger than elephants, or when women lose their pride, or when orang outangs play numble peg in Dahomey?

There runs the white man with the wealth and culture of the ages—all he has vaulted since before oracles sang at Delphi; and since he left the swamps of Germany. He runs and the capacity of his lungs enlarges as the square of the distance increases from the starting point. There are you running after him with what wealth? The burden of your own weight, whispering in panting breath that in the fulness of time and in the ripening of the occasion, you will spring from the trite of this pace as if out of a panoramic box and force a halt on the white man.

Fellow residents, why extenuate your condition? Why equivocate, as if your education were at fault? You are the best educated Negro aggregation in all the earth; as if your religion interfered; the religion which Christ taught, encourages the

practice of manliness, self-respect and love of rights. Have you that religion? If not, then your religion interferes with your freedom. If a religion interferes with your freedom, *fetter that religion and get freedom*. Where is your individuality and the moral and coercive force of your churches?

God, my people, look here! Is it possible that you are really by instinct charmed and victimized by Caucasian discriminatory and humiliating devices? Philosophers tell me that instinct is non-progressive and unchangeable; and that from instinct the mocking bird sings the same notes to-day that it sang a thousand years ago; and the eagle has not advanced one iota in skill since Noah built his Ark, either in nestling her young or in encircling the mountains. If yours be instinct, ah, then, black men; oh, your fate!

There is a hereafter to which we all go, but what torment is worse than endless oppression? What a pang of mind! What a misery of soul! What a flaming conscience!

But you only sleep; arouse, summon your strength, harass, torment "The Missing Link," boycott all optional "Jim Crowism"; nay, eliminate all discriminatory "Isms"; may long live self-respect, manliness, and the Spirit of Freedom.





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